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Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century: implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Associated Country Women of the World, Centre for Women, the Earth, the Divine, European Union of Women, Hadassah — Women's Zionist Organization of America, International Alliance of Women, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of University Women, International Inner Wheel, National Council of German Women's Organizations, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia of Women's Association of Thailand, Salvation Army, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Socialist International Women, Society for International Development, Soroptimist International, Third World Movement against the Exploitation of Women, Women's International Zionist Organization, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

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Statement

We, the undersigned international and national non-governmental organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC, members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women, present to the 49th session of CSW the following statement for information and consideration.

We take note of the fact that in the UN Platform for Action, Beijing 1995 called on governments to take action to "enact and enforce legislation to guarantee the rights of women and men to equal pay for equal work and work of equal value". However, we deplore the fact that little progress has been made since then.

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 emphasizes the right of women "to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work".

We recall Goals 1 and 3 of the UN Millennium Development Goals of 2000 as being to "eradicate extreme poverty and hunger" and "promote gender equality and empower women", and note with great concern that gender disparities persist because many social and legal institutions still do not guarantee women's equality in basic human rights, in access to, or control of land and other resources, in employment and earnings as well as in social and political participation.

In spite of women's full participation in economic life and the labour force, women still earn less than men for work of equal value. The difference in earnings has serious consequences not only for the financial situation of women throughout their lives but also for their families and for society. The lack of a legal framework for the implementation of women's human rights has a strong impact on the labour market, social security and the workplace.

We also draw special attention to the value of the unpaid work women do in family and society, which is an important contribution to economy.

We therefore wish to draw the attention of UN Member States to the need for:

- the full implementation of women's right to equal remuneration, including benefits and social security; labour laws and pay agreements between trade unions and employer's associations must guarantee equal payment for work of equal value;

- the establishment of ombudswomen and other institutional mechanisms to assist women in accessing higher-level posts and in pursuing career opportunities and possibilities;

- creating a favourable environment for women entrepreneurs, especially those starting small-scale businesses;

- progress towards gender balance in the evaluation and allocation of development cooperation projects and programmes, and the involvement of women in NGOs, thus using their expertise;

- a comprehensive approach to reduce poverty among women and to elaborate special strategies at micro and macroeconomic levels to promote sustainable development;

- prosecuting economic and financial crimes, especially corruption, as they affect women specifically;

- empowering women through education and vocational training, and facilitating women's access to microcredit and other financial means as well as to supporting women's income-generating activities.